



Dr Richard Vaughn Tucker

November 25, 1922 - January 12, 2016

Dr. Richard Vaughn Tucker passed away in Bellingham, Washington on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, after a short illness. He was born to Denton and Mittie Marie Tucker in Orofino, Idaho on November 25, 1922 and lived in the Ferndale-Bellingham area for 67 years.

Dr. Tucker grew up the fourth of five boys on a small ranch near Ford's Creek in the Orofino, Idaho area. It was there he formed the values that served him his entire life. As it was the depression era, he learned the value of hard work, and the gift of being able to work. This would keep him practicing dentistry until age ninety. He gained an appreciation for and love of music during these early years, as well. It began with his mother playing the piano for the family in the evenings and lasted a lifetime. He especially enjoyed concerts of music he could hum later. Many friends will remember his humming while he worked. His grandmother, an artist, lived with the family for a time. Through her influence he learned to appreciate fine painting and other forms of art. The Denton Tucker family became active in their small rural community. Similarly, Dr. Tucker would later choose to live in Ferndale, Washington where he became an integral part of the community. He was a member of the Lion's Club, the United Church of Ferndale, and the school board; and he was the dad who would coach Little League Baseball when there were no other volunteers. Dr. Tucker's parents also instilled the importance of family ties and family history. They maintained a connection with his extended family and he

learned about his northwest roots and the adventures of his great-grandfather, Robert Newell, an early day northwest trapper and pioneer. During his years on the ranch, Dr. Tucker also became a good shot and a very patient fisherman. He would later win an occasional shooting trophy and fish the Nooksack River for twenty years before catching his first steelhead.

Following his early education in a small one-room schoolhouse, Dr. Tucker attended Orofino High School. There he learned the value of education. He decided to become a dentist and enrolled in the University of Washington for his undergraduate work. He joined the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, enjoyed the many academic and social aspects of college life, and became a life-long Husky supporter. At the university, he met his future wife, Elaine Vert, in a psychology class. They married June 24th, 1944 and were inseparable during their 71 years of marriage. She followed him to St. Louis, where he was enrolled in the Washington University School of Dentistry, and later to Oakland, California, where he began his two year tour of duty with the U.S. Navy.

After completing his military obligation, Dr. Tucker moved his family to Ferndale and opened a dental practice above the Ferndale Record Newspaper office. From 1948 to 2013, he lived his dream. He was surrounded by a wonderful wife, a family of four children, good friends, and he was practicing a profession he loved. Dentistry was his passion. He challenged himself to achieve perfection for his patients. When long-time Bellingham dentist, Dr. George Ellsperman, encouraged him to join a gold foil study club, he discovered the benefits of gold restorations for his patients. It wasn't long before Dr. Tucker developed his own cast gold technique, later to be known as "The Tucker Technique." News of his innovations spread and in 1976 he started the first Richard Tucker Cast Gold Study Club for dentists in Vancouver, B.C. in response to their request for mentoring in his technique. From the inception of study club #1 with 12 members, the Academy of R.V.

Tucker Study Clubs grew to where it is today, a collegial group of more than 700 current and former dedicated members in 73 study clubs around the world. Dr. Tucker had become not only a dentist, but also a teacher. He taught his technique and also the discipline and excellence required to do fine dentistry through the study club model. He made more than 250 lectures on cast gold restorations to dental schools and dental organizations around the world, wrote numerous articles for professional journals, made teaching videos, taught dental students at the University of Washington, and for twenty-five years taught an annual cast gold summer session at the University of British Columbia.

During his lifetime, Dr. Tucker's many professional achievements and awards included: president of the Washington State Dental Society; president of the Academy of Operative Dentistry; honorary membership in the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia – the first American to receive the honor; Honorary Doctor of Laws degree, UBC – the first nomination by the Faculty of Dentistry and the first honorary degree awarded to a dentist in the history of the university; the Biaggi Gold Medal from the XXIII Italian Congress in Rimini, Italy; the Gold Medal for Excellence from the Academy of Operative Dentistry; the Albert Borish Award given by the Academy of General Dentistry; and most recently, the American Dental Association Distinguished Service Award.

In spite of all these honors and awards, Dr. Tucker referred to himself simply as a Ferndale dentist. Over the years he could be found in his dental office; at home with his family; sailing his boat, the Line Angle; salmon fishing; or playing bridge with his neighborhood friends.

Survivors include his children: Ann Marie Ratliff (Fleet), Richard Denton Tucker (Christina), Victoria Lynn Otterholt (Dana), and Martha Elaine Hoss (Richard); ten grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren; a younger sister: Rita

Marie Sparks (Roger) of Ellensburg, Washington, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife, Elaine, and his four brothers.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a memorial to the United Church of Ferndale, the Boys and Girls Club of Ferndale, the University of Washington School of Dentistry, or the University of British Columbia School of Dentistry.

A memorial service will be held at 2:00 PM Friday, February 5th, 2016 at the United Church of Ferndale with Rev. Bobbi Virta officiating.

Tribute Wall

CW

“ Sincere sympathies from the Madison Family.

Cindy (Madison) Wilson - January 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ DR Tucker,
You will be remembered always by Sandy and me for your kindness each time we met and dedication to excellence in dentistry. You were the dentist we held as a model for our practice and our lives. The world is a better place because of you.
Jim and Sandy Deckman

James M Deckman - January 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

AB

“ I am sorry for your loss. It is difficult to deal with the loss of someone you love. 2 Corinthians 1:3,4 reminds us that God is always there to comfort us. I pray this helps you and your family.

AB - January 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MJ

“ Dr. tucker was a humble, kind and compassion Dentist. He was the mentor of a Gold Study Club where I had the honor of getting to know him. He never looked for recognition or praise but was an incredible mentor who was also kind to the Dental Assistants including myself. He will not be forgotten as he made an impression on my life.
May his family be comforted in this time of great loss.

Marlene Jahn - January 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM